

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

- 5 Claim 1 (previously presented): A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:  
     a gear member having an axis of rotation;  
     a generally cylindrical member having a first slot formed therein;  
     a retaining member attached to said gear member, said retaining member having a first  
 protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said  
 10 generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of  
     rotation, whereby said gear member is retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical  
     member when said first protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said gear member is  
     free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is  
     aligned with said first slot;  
 15      a bearing assembly engaged between said gear member and said generally cylindrical  
     member and permitting rotation of said retaining member about said axis relative to said  
     generally cylindrical member.

Claim 2 (original): The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

- 20      a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical member being attached to said bearing carrier.

Claim 3 (original): The mechanism of claim 1, wherein:

    said generally cylindrical member is a bearing adaptor.

- 25 Claim 4 (canceled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

- a thrust bearing disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical  
     member, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation, said thrust  
 30 bearing having a first axial face axially facing and engaging said gear member, and a second  
     distally oppositely facing axial face axially facing and engaging said generally cylindrical

member.

Claim 6 (original): The mechanism of claim 1, further comprising:

a thrust ring and a seal ring disposed between said gear member and said generally  
5 cylindrical member, said thrust ring and seal ring being generally concentric with said axis of rotation.

Claim 7 (original): The mechanism of claim 1, wherein:

said generally cylindrical member has a second slot formed therein.

Claim 8 (original): The mechanism of claim 7, wherein:

said retaining member has a second protuberance shaped to pass through said second slot  
and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation  
of said gear member about said axis of rotation.

Claim 9 (original): The mechanism of claim 8, wherein:

said first and second protuberances are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on  
said retaining member.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The mechanism of claim 10~~7~~, wherein:

said first and second slots are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said  
generally cylindrical member.

Claim 11 (original) The mechanism of claim 10, wherein:

said gear member is a bevel gear.

Claim 12 (previously presented) A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:

a gear member having an axis of rotation;

a generally cylindrical member having a first slot formed therein;

a retaining member attached to said gear member, said retaining member having a first  
30 protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said

generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation, whereby said gear member is retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said gear member is free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical member when said first protuberance is aligned with said first slot;

a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical member being attached to said bearing carrier;

a bearing assembly engaged between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member and permitting rotation of said retaining member about said axis relative to said generally cylindrical member.

Claim 13 (original): The mechanism of claim 12, further comprising:

a thrust bearing disposed between said gear member and said generally cylindrical member, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation.

Claim 14 (original): The mechanism of claim 13, wherein:

said generally cylindrical member has a second slot formed therein.

Claim 15 (original): The mechanism of claim 14, wherein:

said retaining member has a second protuberance shaped to pass through said second slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical member in response to rotation of said gear member about said axis of rotation.

Claim 16 (original): The mechanism of claim 15, wherein:

said first and second protuberances are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said retaining member; and

said first and second slots are disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said generally cylindrical member.

Claim 17 (original): The mechanism of claim 16, wherein:

said gear member is a bevel gear.

Claim 18 (canceled)

Claim 19 (currently amended): A mechanism for a marine propulsion system, comprising:

5 a bevel gear having an axis of rotation;  
a generally cylindrical bearing adaptor having a first slot and a second slot formed therein;

a retaining member attached to said bevel gear, said retaining member having a first protuberance shaped to pass through said first slot and move into interfering relation with said  
10 generally cylindrical bearing adaptor in response to rotation of said bevel gear about said axis of rotation, whereby said bevel gear is retained axially relative to said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor when said first protuberance is not aligned with said first slot and said bevel gear is free to move axially away from said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor when said first  
protuberance is aligned with said first slot, said retaining member having a second protuberance  
15 shaped to pass through said second slot and move into interfering relation with said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor in response to rotation of said bevel gear about said axis of rotation;

a bearing assembly engaged between said gear member and said generally cylindrical  
~~member~~ bearing adapter and permitting rotation of said retaining member about said axis relative  
to said generally cylindrical ~~member~~ bearing adapter.

20 Claim 20 (previously presented): The mechanism of claim 19, further comprising:

a bearing carrier, said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor being attached to said bearing carrier;

said bearing assembly comprising a roller bearing assembly attached to said bearing  
25 adaptor;

a thrust bearing disposed between said bevel gear and said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor, said thrust bearing being generally concentric with said axis of rotation, said thrust bearing having a first axial face axially facing and engaging said gear member, and a second distally oppositely facing axial face axially facing and engaging said generally cylindrical  
30 member; and

a thrust ring and a seal ring disposed between said bevel gear and said generally

cylindrical bearing adaptor, said thrust ring and seal ring being generally concentric with said axis of rotation, said first and second protuberances being disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said retaining member, said first and second slots being disposed at diametrically opposite positions on said generally cylindrical bearing adaptor.

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Claim 21 (previously presented): The mechanism of claim 1, wherein said retaining member and said first protuberance are fixed relative to said gear member.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The mechanism of claim 1, wherein said bearing assembly  
10 extends axially to an axial end, said protuberance and said slot extend along a radial projection bridging between said generally cylindrical member and said retaining member axially beyond said axial end of said bearing assembly, said radial bridging projection being axially aligned with said bearing assembly and axially facing and axially spaced from said axial end of said bearing assembly.

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